

Decision Record for a Categorically Excluded Action

Introduction and Background

On June 26, 2009, Barry Perryman from the University of Nevada-Reno (Proponent) made a request to conduct destructive sampling of Sagebrush at a site within the Surprise Field Office to conduct a study.

The overall intent of the project is to determine what types of climatic events trigger recruitment pulses in sagebrush stands across Nevada. Proponent explained that in order to do this good age class information on sagebrush plants must be collected. Annual growth-ring data would accomplish this. In order to acquire this information, destructively sampling of some sagebrush plants would be necessary. It is estimated that a total of about 250 plants would need to be harvested to acquire an acceptable sample.

Decision and Rationale

It is my decision to approve the proposed action as submitted.

The proposed action is limited in scope and duration, will further the understanding of sagebrush ecology in the Great Basin. While not specifically described in the Surprise RMP, the action is consistent with intent of the RMP which is to manage the public lands within the Surprise Field Office for the purposes of management of the lands and resources administered by the Surprise Field Office of the BLM. The proposed action will further understanding of sagebrush ecology.

Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Policies and Land Use Plans

The proposed action is in conformance with the relevant laws regulations and policies regarding the management of public lands resources.

Administrative Remedies

Administrative remedies may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Appeals may be made to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board) in strict compliance with the regulations in 43 CFR Part 4. Notices of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days after publication of this decision. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed. The notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Department of Interior, 2800 Cottage Way, E-1712, Sacramento, CA 95825.


Shane DeForest
Field Manager

7/27/09
Date



"Perryman, Barry"
<BPerryman@cabnr.unr.edu>

07/27/2009 11:04 AM

To <Shane_DeForest@ca.blm.gov>

cc

bcc

Subject RE: FW: Sagebrush Stand Sampling in Schell Field Office

Thanks! Would it be possible to fax it? My fax # is 775-784-1375

My mailing address is:

Barry Perryman

Department of

Animal

Biotechnology

Mail Stop 202

University of

Nevada-Reno

Reno, NV 89557

-----Original Message-----

From: Shane_DeForest@ca.blm.gov [mailto:Shane_DeForest@ca.blm.gov]

Sent: Monday, July 27, 2009 11:02 AM

To: Perryman, Barry

Subject: Re: FW: Sagebrush Stand Sampling in Schell Field Office

Thank you for the information. On our side, what we did was to complete a Categorical Exclusion for the activity. We have completed this work and your activity may proceed. Please forward me your mailing address, so we can send you the decision and approval.

Shane DeForest
Field Manager
Surprise Field Office
PO BOX 460
602 Cressler St.
Cedarville, CA 96104
(530) 279-2749

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

A. Background

BLM Office: LLCAN070000

Lease/Serial/Case File #DOI-BLM-CA-N070-0010-CX

Project Title UNR SAGEBRUSH RECRUITMENT STUDY

Location Two study sites would be sampled (Maps attached)

Site 1:(N 41°38.906' W 119°27.354') elev 5908ft

Site 2:(N 41°22.430' W 119°38.996') elev 5722ft

Description and Rationale, including any Stipulations

On June 26, 2009, Barry Perryman from the University of Nevada-Reno (Proponent) made a request to conduct destructive sampling of Sagebrush at a site within the Surprise Field Office to conduct a study.

The overall intent of the project is to determine what types of climatic events trigger recruitment pulses in sagebrush stands across Nevada. Proponent explained that in order to do this good age class information on sagebrush plants must be collected. Annual growth-ring data would accomplish this. In order to acquire this information, destructively sampling of some sagebrush plants would be necessary. It is estimated that a total of about 250 plants would need to be harvested to acquire an acceptable sample. Sample design is described below.

Methods and Locations

A stratified random sampling procedure would be used to select the individual shrubs at each site. A 100 meter baseline transect would be located within each site, and 8 random points selected along each transect. A 100 meter perpendicular transect would be established from each random point along the baseline. Along each perpendicular transect, 10 random points would be marked, and the closest big sagebrush plant would be sampled. Cross-sections will be obtained by sawing individual plants 4–6 cm below ground level to ensure that the pith and first annual growth ring are counted. 75-80 sagebrush plants would be cut from each site.

There would be minimal surface disturbance. Proponent would use established roads with no cross country driving. Movement to and from actual sampling sites would be by foot traffic only. No internal combustion engines (e.g., chainsaws, OHVs) would be used. Removal of sagebrush plants will be by hand. The field crew will consist of 2-3 individuals, and we anticipate 6-7 days to complete the sampling at this site.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

While not specifically mentioned in the 2008 Surprise RMP, this action is consistent with the intent of the RMP in its efforts to understand the ecology of the Great Basin, and the function of the Sagebrush plant community which dominates it.

C. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 [Disposal of small amountas of miscellaneous vegetation products outside established harvest areas]

This categorical exclusion is appropriate for this action because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply (see attached).

I considered [the type of activity, duration of impact, scope of impact, and public purpose achieved]

D. Signature


Shane DeForest,
Surprise Field Office Manager

7-27-09
Date

E. Contact

For further information on this activity, contact Elias Flores, Wildlife Biologist

Review of Extraordinary Circumstances

The Department of the Interior Manual 516 2.3A (3) requires review of the following "extraordinary circumstances" (516 DM 2 Appendix 2) to determine if an otherwise categorically excluded action would require additional environmental analysis/documentation.

1) *Have significant impacts on public health or safety.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

2) *Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

3) *Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

4) *Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

5) *Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

6) *Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

7) *Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments: *Both sites are adjacent to known cultural resources. Mr. Perryman needs to know that artifacts encountered need to be left in place. AB.*

8) *Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

None of these species in project area. 2006 Army data indicates that no pygmy rabbit in project area. FFJ2

9) *Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

10) *Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

11) *Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

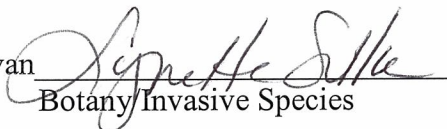
12) *Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Comments:

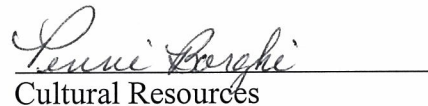
Reviewers

Lynette Sullivan


Botany/Invasive Species

7/23/2009

Penni Borghi

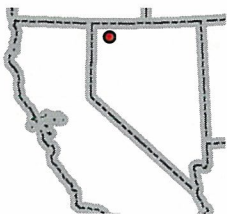
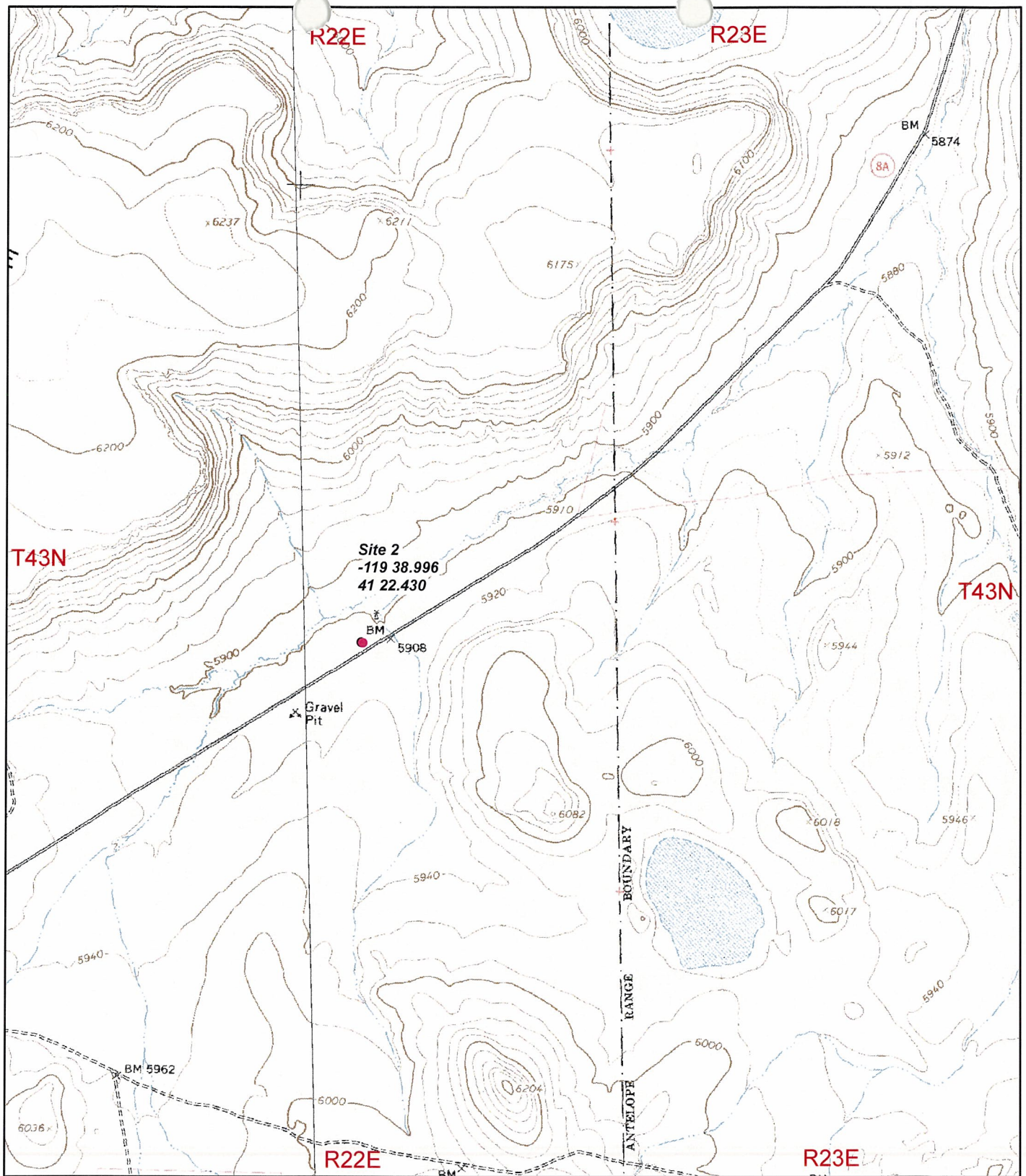

Cultural Resources

July 23, 2009

Elias Flores


Wildlife, T/E/S Species

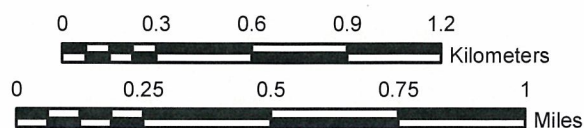
9/24/2009



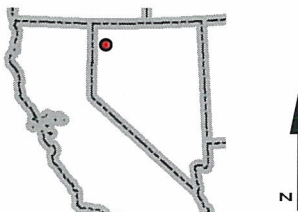
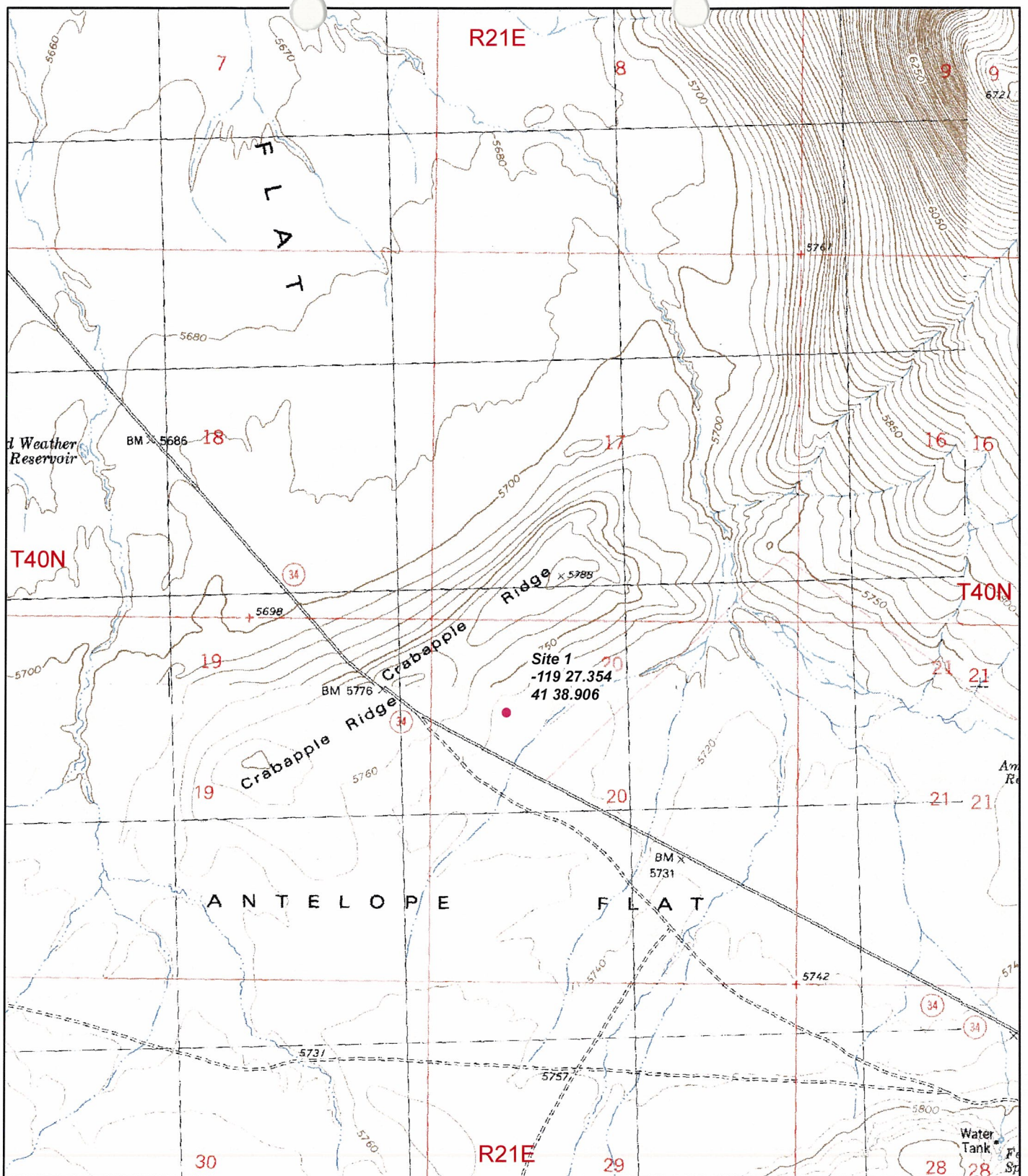
UNR Sagebrush Recruitment Study

Site 2

Scale 1:24000



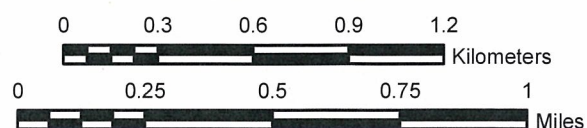
Quadrangle Badger Mtn. NW



UNR Sagebrush Recruitment Study

Site 1

Scale 1:24000



Quadrangle
Pinto Springs
Power Wells
Nellie Spring Mtn
Hart Mtn

Kathryn
Dyer/CASO/CA/BLM/DOI
06/26/2009 08:58 AM

To Shane DeForest/CASO/CA/BLM/DOI@BLM
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: Permission to sample sagebrush

Shane, Barry sent this to me to send to you because he couldn't find your e-mail. I told him you would be the one to send it to, and then you could delegate the work to whomever was appropriate. Thank you.

Kathryn Dyer
Rangeland Management Specialist
Surprise BLM Field Office
602 Cressler/PO Box 460
Cedarville, CA 96104
Kathryn_dyer@ca.blm.gov
(530) 279-2704

----- Forwarded by Kathryn Dyer/CASO/CA/BLM/DOI on 06/26/2009 08:57 AM -----



"Perryman, Barry"
<BPerryman@cabnr.unr.edu>

06/26/2009 08:50 AM

To <Kathryn_Dyer@ca.blm.gov>, "Erin Hourihan"
<ehourihan@gmail.com>
cc
Subject Permission to sample sagebrush

Shane,

Attached you will find my request for permission to sample some Lahontan sagebrush sites near Vya, NV. I spoke to Kathryn Dyer and she directed me to route the request directly to you. The attachment should be self explanatory.

We would like to begin the research as soon as arrangements can be made.

If you have any more questions, please let me know.

Thanks in advance,
Barry L. Perryman



Surprise LHsageltr.docx

TO: Shane DeForest
BLM Surprise District
602 Cressler Street
Cedarville, CA 96104

FROM: Barry Perryman
Dept. of Animal Biotechnology
University of Nevada-Reno, Mail Stop 202
Reno, NV 89557

RE: Permission to sample sagebrush stands in the Vya area

Shane,

I spoke with Kathryn about the possibility of sampling some Lahontan sagebrush near Vya, NV. She directed me to route the request directly to you. I have included as many specifics as I could think of and they are listed below. If you have additional questions, you can contact me by email (bperryman@cabnr.unr.edu) or phone (775.784.1265). Email may be quicker. We would like to begin the project as soon as practicable. The overall intent of the project is to determine what types of climatic events trigger recruitment pulses in sagebrush stands across Nevada. In order to do this we must get good age information on sagebrush plants. We use annual growth-rings to do this, so we must destructively sample some sagebrush plants. We anticipate taking only about 250 plants from the sagebrush sea southeast of Vya.

Methods and Locations

A stratified random sampling procedure (Cochran 1977) will be used to select the individual shrubs sampled in each stand. A 100 meter baseline transect will be located within each stand, and 8 random points selected along the transect. A 100 meter perpendicular transect will be established from each point along the baseline. Along each perpendicular transect, 10 random points will be marked, and the closest big sagebrush plant will be sampled. Cross-sections will be obtained by sawing individual plants 4–6 cm below ground level (Ferguson 1964) to ensure that the pith and first annual growth ring are counted. We will cut approximately 75-80 sagebrush plants from each stand.

We anticipate selecting three Lahontan sagebrush stands near the following proposed locations:

SE of Vya between Vya and Gerlach

wypt 155 (N 41°38.906' W 119°27.354') elev 5908ft

wypt 156 (N 41°22.430' W 119°38.996') elev 5722ft

There will be minimal surface disturbance. We will use established roads with no cross country driving. Movement to and from actual sampling sites will be by foot traffic only. No internal combustion engines (e.g., chainsaws, OHVs) will be used. Removal of sagebrush plants will be by hand. The field crew will consist of 2-3 individuals, and we anticipate 6-7 days to complete the sampling at this site.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks in advance for your cooperation!

Regards,

Barry L. Perryman
Associate Professor

LETTER TO PROJECT FILE

SUBJECT: Cultural Resource Inventory Report

PROJECT/EA NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CA-N070-0010-CX

CR REPORT #: 430 UNR Sagebrush Recruitment Study

DATE (S) COMPLETED: July 23, 2009

TYPE OF SURVEY: CLASS III ☐ CLASS II ☐ CLASS I ☒

CULTURAL RESOURCES PRESENT: Sites 0 Isolates 0

ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES: None.

DETERMINATION OF EFFECT: No Effect ☒ No Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect ☐

COMMENTS: This project is exempt from further Section 106 review or consideration under Exempt Undertakings, Class A Activities, A1- Activities which involve nor more than two (2) square meters of cumulative surface disturbance, Appendix D of the BLM/California SHPO Protocol Agreement.

SHPO CONSULTATION/106 STEPS COMPLETED: N/A

DISCUSSION: This letter to the file documents that I have reviewed Cultural Resource Inventory for the above UNR Sagebrush Recruitment Study. Pursuant to the Protocol Agreement (2004) between BLM, California and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and affirm that all necessary steps have been taken to identify, record, and determine effects on cultural resources within the projects area of potential effect. This report has been completed by an approved staff specialist and is in accordance with all standards and guidelines as outlined in the Protocol Agreement .

I concur with the findings of this analysis.


Shane DeForest
Surprise Field Manager





United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Surprise Field Office
PO Box 460
Cedarville, CA 96104
www.ca.blm.gov/surprise

In Reply Refer To:
4000(CA370) P

July 29, 2009

Dr. Barry Perryman,
Department of Animal Biotechnology
Mail Stop 202
University of Nevada Reno
Reno, NV 89557

Dear Dr. Perryman:

The Surprise Field Office has completed our review of your proposed sagebrush sampling at two locations within the Surprise Field Office. Our review has concluded that there would be no environmental effects from your project.

Both of the sample sites are adjacent to known cultural sites. Please advise your work crew to leave any artifacts encountered during the sampling in place.

This letter authorizes you to proceed with your sampling program. Please advise this office if your project changes. In addition, we would like to request a copy of any reports you generate as a result of this effort.

Sincerely

Shane DeForest
Surprise Field Manager